

to strengthen relations with the State of Israel for the mutual benefit of the citizens of both countries, I hereby direct the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to begin discussions with the Government of Israel on issues pertaining to affordable housing and community development, with the aim of establishing a binational commission to structure a cooperative exchange program in this field. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall convene and chair the American side of this binational commission, and the membership should be composed of experts active in housing policy, mortgage markets, residential construction technology, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and related fields of research and practice vital to the health and well-being of towns and cities. All activity undertaken pursuant to this memorandum shall be coordinated with the Department of State.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 20. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for King Mohamed VI of Morocco

June 20, 2000

Your Majesty, members of the Moroccan delegation, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the United States, I am delighted to welcome the King of Morocco to America.

Your Majesty, as we were just discussing, it was 22 years ago when the people of the United States first welcomed you to this House, when you came as Crown Prince with your father, His Majesty King Hassan II. Today we welcome you back in the same spirit of friendship that has joined our two nations since the beginning of the American republic.

Your Majesty, America will never forget that in 1777, the first nation in the world to recognize the United States was the Kingdom of Morocco. Ten years later, our two countries approved a treaty of peace and friendship, which today remains the longest

unbroken treaty of its kind in all history. In the days since, we have stood together to live up to that treaty's ideals and to secure its blessings for others.

During the Second World War, more than 300,000 Moroccans fought alongside the Allies against Nazi tyranny. Today, Moroccan soldiers stand shoulder to shoulder with Americans as we keep the peace in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Morocco's location has made it a bridge between east and west. Morocco's leadership has made it a bridge between peoples.

During the Second World War, King Mohamed V resisted efforts to target and capture Moroccan Jews. In our time, King Hassan worked hard to bring people together to secure a comprehensive peace for the people of the Middle East. He reminded us of the ancient wisdom of the Koran that if two groups of believers fight each other, we should endeavor to reconcile them. He helped bring us closer than we have ever been to a real and lasting peace.

Your Majesty, I was proud to walk with the people of Morocco on that sad day last July, when we crossed the city of Rabat to lay your father to rest. Providence called upon you to be one of the voices of a new generation of Arab leaders, and you have responded with courage and conviction, healing old wounds, promoting democracy, lifting those left behind, touching the hearts of your people. Morocco is a sterling example of Islamic tolerance, a force for peace, rooted in the common values of humanity.

In the 20th century, Morocco helped to make the world safe for democracy. In the 21st century, let us, together, make it also safe for diversity.

On the day that he died, His Majesty King Hassan, had a letter sitting on his desk ready to be signed, a letter he had asked to be drafted, that reaffirmed what he called, "our shared principles of freedom and solidarity, and our unshakable belief in the values of democracy, peace, prosperity, and progress." That letter was written on the very same kind of parchment as the letter passed between Sultan Mohammed III and President George Washington, more than two centuries ago. Your Majesty, in the days ahead, may we affirm that letter and our old, old friendship

with deeds, as well as words. May the partnership between our nations continue to show the way for the rest of the world.

Your Majesty, we are honored that you are here. We are honored by the way you represent your nation and the potential we have to build on our rich, long partnership. Welcome to the White House. Welcome to America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where King Mohamed VI was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of King Mohamed VI.

Remarks on the District of Columbia College Access Act

June 20, 2000

Thank you very much. Well, this is a very happy day. Welcome. I'd like to thank Representatives Eleanor Holmes Norton, Tom Davis, and Jim Moran for their role in this day; and Secretary Riley; OMB Director Lew, especially for his role as the Chair of the Federal DC Interagency Task Force. And I'd like to thank Grant Stockdale, who first proposed this idea several years ago.

I am sorry that Mayor Williams couldn't be with us today, but the city is very well represented. And I want to welcome the university presidents from George Mason, Trinity, Bowie State, and Delaware State who are here today, as well as students they'll be welcoming because of the DC College Access Act. We also have some of the educators and parents who helped get these children to college, and the leaders of the DC College Access program who are raising private funds to help local students meet all the costs of a university education.

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

I want to talk in a moment about all that you have done together, but because this is my only opportunity to be with the press today, I want to say just a few words about another issue where your example of bipartisanship could stand us in good stead, and that is our stewardship of the Medicare program.

This week the House is preparing to vote on a proposal for a prescription drug benefit for older Americans and people with disabilities. Unfortunately, in my opinion at least, the private insurance drug plan does not achieve that objective, of giving affordable, dependable coverage to every senior who needs it. At the same time, we have to face the challenge of making sure we pay the Medicare providers enough so they can give our seniors the high quality care they deserve.

Payments are too low in important areas, and Medicare patients are at risk. Some think we have to choose between the prescription drug benefit and adequate quality care. But because of our remarkable prosperity, I believe we can do both, especially given the present strength of the Medicare Trust Fund. And I think we should do it right.

Today I am proposing to dedicate \$40 billion over the next 10 years to ensure that our providers can continue to provide quality care. I think all of us recognize, and I do think this is a bipartisan recognition, that when we passed the Balanced Budget Act of '97, we did not provide adequate funding for the medical providers of the country, and this will help, by increasing Medicare payments to hospitals, teaching facilities, nursing homes, and the home health care programs, so that Medicare patients can get what they need.

My proposal also endorses Vice President Gore's initiatives to say for the very first time, the Medicare surplus will be off-budget, like the Social Security surplus, and therefore, can no longer be diverted for other purposes. Under the Vice President's plan, Medicare must be saved for paying down the debt in order to strengthen the life of the Medicare program.

Today the House is voting on a proposal that embraces this concept and takes an important step toward achieving the goal. And I'm very pleased, and again, I think it will have strong bipartisan support. I hope it will be strengthened in the Senate, so there will be absolutely no question that any loophole can allow the money to be spent in other ways.